



California Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 2015

Supreme Court Makes Reappointments to Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions

Judge Robert Trentacosta reappointed as member; Justice Ronald Robie and Justice Douglas Miller reappointed as members and as chair and vice-chair

SAN FRANCISCO—The California Supreme Court today announced the reappointment of three current members of the Supreme Court [Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions](http://www.JudicialEthicsOpinions.ca.gov) (CJEO), an independent committee appointed by the court to help inform the judiciary and the public on judicial ethics topics. The committee was established by the Supreme Court as part of its constitutional responsibility to guide the conduct of judges and judicial candidates (Cal. Const. art VI, § 18(m)).

Justice Ronald B. Robie of the Third District Court of Appeal, Justice Douglas P. Miller of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, Division Four, and Judge Robert J. Trentacosta of the San Diego County Superior Court will each serve additional four-year terms as CJEO members. Justice Robie was also reappointed to serve an additional four-year term as the chair of CJEO, and Justice Miller was reappointed to serve an additional four-year term as the vice-chair. The reappointments are effective January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2019.

In related action, the Supreme Court also adopted amendments to the rule of court governing CJEO. After inviting public comment on a proposal to amend [rule 9.80](#) of the California Rules of Court, the court revised rule 9.80(d) & (g) to: (1) make CJEO members generally eligible to serve a third four-year term on the committee in the event the court wishes to reappoint them; (2) make initial CJEO members eligible to serve a second four-year term in the event the court wishes to reappoint them; (3) double the term of the chair from two years to four years, plus make the chair eligible to serve a third term in the event the court wishes to reappoint the chair; and (4) provide terms and term limits for the vice-chair that match those of the chair.

CJEO is authorized by the Supreme Court to provide judicial ethics advisory opinions and advice for the benefit of the judiciary and the public (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(a)). The committee publishes formal opinions, issues confidential informal opinions, and provides oral advice on proper judicial conduct pursuant to the California Code of Judicial Ethics and other authorities

(rule 9.80(e)(1)). CJEO acts independently of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Judicial Performance, the Judicial Council, and all other entities (rule 9.80(b)).

In making appointments to serve on CJEO, the Supreme Court considers a wide range of judicial experience, including factors such as a strong background in judicial ethics, experience as a presiding judge, courtroom experience in a variety of settings, and service in courts of different size throughout the state. The goal is to create a committee that reflects the diversity of challenges encountered by judges in California, who function in a varied environment. The current CJEO members are: Justice Ronald B. Robie of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District (chair); Justice Douglas P. Miller of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two (vice-chair); Justice Maria P. Rivera of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four; Justice Judith L. Haller of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division One; Presiding Judge Suzanne N. Kingsbury of the Superior Court of El Dorado County; Judge Robert J. Trentacosta of the Superior Court of San Diego County; Judge Kenneth K. So of the Superior Court of San Diego County; Judge Michael T. Garcia (Ret.) of the Superior Court of Sacramento County; Judge Joanne B. O'Donnell of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County; Judge George J. Abdallah, Jr. of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County; Judge Curtis E.A. Karnow of the Superior Court of San Francisco County; and Commissioner Lowell E. Richards of the Superior Court of Contra Costa County.

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The Supreme Court established the Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions (CJEO) to help inform the judiciary and the public concerning judicial ethics topics. (Cal. Rules of Court, [rule 9.80.](#)) CJEO publishes formal advisory opinions, issues confidential written opinions, and provides oral advice on proper judicial conduct pursuant to the [California Code of Judicial Ethics](#) and other authorities. In providing its advisory opinions, the committee acts independently of the Supreme Court, the Commission on Judicial Performance, the Judicial Council, and all other entities. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(b).)